village Seur-Chamurkha are in the waiting list for about one year. It is planned to clear this waiting list gradually by March, 1998.

(d) and (e) No Sir. Telephone connections have not been provided to them since they have not yet applied for the same.

Communication Facilities in N.E. Region

6. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state the details of schemes/ projects launched and steps undertaken/ contemplated to improve upon communication facilities in the North-Eastern Region with special reference to Assam?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): During 1997-98, it is proposed to provide 73,000 lines of net switching capacity, 57,500 telephone connections and 6,000 village public telephones in North-East Region which includes net switching capacity of 44,000 lines, 35,000 telephone connections and 4,000 village public telephones for Assam.

During 9th Plan period, the following improvements are proposed for North-East Region including Assam:—

(a) All the remaining Sub-Divisional head quarters in the North East Region will be provided with STD/ ISD facility.

(b) Remaining electro-mechanical exchanges will be replaced by electronic exchanges.

(c) All the remaining villages will be provided with telephone facility.

(d) Provide telephone on demand and connect exchanges by reliable media to bring North-East Region including Assam comparable with most other States of the country.

Application for shifting the Telephone within the Janpath Telephone Exchange

7. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of telephone subscribers who applied for shifting of their telephone within the Janpath Telephone Exchange during the months of May and June, 1997;

(b) the dates on which OBs were issued in respect of those telephone subscribers and the actual date on which the telephone starred functicning at the new premises;

(c) whether the officials in the Janpath Telephone Exchange have ignored to accede to the request of the telephone subscribers on 'first-come-first-serve' basis for shifting of their telephones; and

(d) if so, the action Government propose to take against the officials who deliberately violated the norms and rules?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUINICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Sir, the details of 147 telephone subscribers who applied for shifting of their telephones during the months of May and June, 97 are given as per list enclosed. (*See* Appendix 181, Annexure No. 1).

(b) Sir, complete details about the date of request received, OB issued and actual date of execution of OB are given as per list enclosed. (*see* Appendix 181, Annexure No. 1)

(c) No Sir. Shifting of telephones in the feasible pockets have been implemented pillarwise on seniority basis.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c).

Transfer/Shifting of the Telephone Connection

8. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of days permissible under the rules of MTNL for effecting transfer/shifting of a telephone connection from one telephone exchange to another and within the same telephone exchange on request of a subscriber;

(b) the details of telephones, exchange-wise, which could not be transferred/ shifted within the prescribed time limit;

(c) the steps taken by MTNL to shift telephone connections expeditiously within the prescribed time limit and action taken against those officials who are found guilty of delaying transfer/ shifting of telephone connections; and

(d) the remedial measures/concessions like rebate in telephone rent for delay beyond prescribed limit available to subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Sir, the prescribed norms being observed in MTNL for shifting of telephone connections are:—

1. Local shifting—within 7 days (within the same exchange).

2. Inter—exchange-within 15 days shifting (from one exchange to another exchange)

(b) The exchange-wise details of all pending shift cases (beyond prescribed norms) as on 18.7.97 are annexed. (*See* Appendix 181, Annexure No. 2)

(c) To ensure expeditious shifting of telephones within the prescribed time limit, steps taken in MTNL are:

1. Commercial formalities have been minimised and OBs are issued promptly.

2. For inter-exchange shifts, clearance is being taken on FAX/Phone to avoid delay in the execution of OBs.

3. New underground cables are being laid expeditiously in areas presently technically non-feasible.

4. Monitoring of shift. OBs at various levels for early execution of these OBs.

5. Delay in the execution of OBs; wherever observed due to the officials; the matter is investigated to expedite shifts.

(d) Rebate in rentals is being allowed to the subscriber when a telephone is disconnected at the old address due to shift and a telephone at new address is not provided within prescribed norms due to departmental reasons.

Post Office in Gram Panchayats in district Banka, Bhagalpur, Deoghar of Bihar

9. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) how many Gram Panchayats in Banka, Bhagalpur, Deoghar, Dumka, Godda and Jamui District of Bihar have demanded Post Offices;

(b) how many Post Offices will be opened in the various villages in Banka, Bhagalpur, Deoghar, Dumka, Godda and Jamui District during the current year;

(c) in what manner this huge demand is proposed to be met; and

(d) the steps being taken so that all the villages get a Post Office?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Nine Gram Panchayats of Banka Seven of Bhagalpur, Five of Deoghar Six of Dumka, Eight of Godda and Eight of Jamui Districts have demanded opening of post offices.

(b) to (d) District-wise targets are not allocated. Post Offices are opened on the norm based justification subject to availability of resources.

Target for Installation of STD/PCO

10. SHRI MOHINDAR SINGH KALYAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state: